Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities

Annual Report 2005 – 2006

BRITISH COLUMBIA

WorkAble Solutions

Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities

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Council Mandate

The Council advises the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance on solutions and strategies for increasing the employment, employability and independence of persons with disabilities, particularly through partnerships with business and industry throughout British Columbia.

Leadership, partnership and action by employers, persons with disabilities, governments, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders are integral to the success of the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities.

The Council is a "call to action," and a positive challenge to B.C.'s business community.

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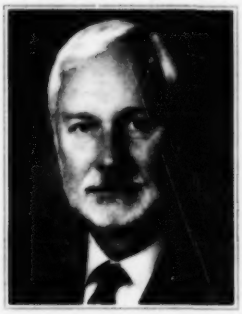


Letter from the Minister

On behalf of the Government of British Columbia's Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, I am pleased to present the third annual report of the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities.

At the Ministry of Emploment and Income Assistance, it is our goal to build the best system of support for people in need – while helping those who are able to work to find good jobs. Our commitment to assisting people with disabilities to achieve greater independence through employment not only provides these individuals with an opportunity to build the futures they want, but also provides B.C. businesses with a valuable resource of talented and motivated staff.

Now with B.C.'s economy the strongest it's been in decades, it is more important than ever that B.C. businesses have access to as many skilled workers as possible. Our goal is to ensure that B.C. businesses are not only aware of what people with disabilities can offer but are in a position to take advantage of this largely untapped human resource.

An emerging theme of the Council during the past year has been "capacity building" – improving the effectiveness of government supports and the services of our community partners – and this theme will continue to direct the work of the Minister's Council in the coming year.

In 2005, the Council worked with partners Kwantlen College and the Human Resource Management Association to put its research to practical use through a marketing pilot project. Teams of "ambassadors" – all with disabilities themselves – far exceeded their own mandate by visiting 125 business leaders in Vancouver and Greater Victoria. Equipped with the WorkAble Solutions Employers' Handbook and research findings, corporate video and a solid business case for including people with disabilities in the workplace, these inspiring men and women helped business leaders appreciate the labour force they've not yet fully utilized.

Another achievement of the Council in 2005 was our working in partnership with community agencies providing workplace supports for people with disabilities throughout the province. Last year, the Council approved 17 grants totaling $724,504 for projects that improve employment and employability for people with disabilities.

I am proud of Council's accomplishments over the past year and I thank each member for the contributions they've made. Our work is making a real difference in the lives of British Columbians with disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

Introduction to the 2005 – 2006 Annual Report

The 2004 Minister's Council report, *"A Profile of Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia: Employment, Labour Market Needs and Occupational Projection"* indicates that labour market trends in B.C. point to a growing need for employers to consider non-traditional labour market groups, including persons with disabilities. Systemic issues and historical biases in labour practices must be addressed for persons with disabilities to access employment opportunities.

To instigate change in B.C.'s business community, we require a coordinated effort by employers and government.

In the 2005 – 2006 fiscal year, the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities collaborated with Kwantlen University College, BC Human Resources Management Association and London Drugs on a unique pilot project designed to assist employers and the business community in British Columbia to invest in an untapped talent pool for their companies – persons with disabilities.

A team of marketers – all with disabilities themselves – were specifically trained to assist employers in understanding the business case for hiring persons with disabilities. The team used the WorkAble Solutions tools (www.workablesolutionsbc.ca) to educate British Columbia's employers on the steps to recruit, employ and retain persons with disabilities. The project exceeded its marketing targets, reaching 125 employers in their workplaces and demonstrating the positive results of a coordinated effort from B.C. business leaders, persons with disabilities and government.

The Disability Supports for Employment Fund, a $20 million endowment fund created by the government in 2003, further demonstrates the value of partnerships and community support. Managed by the Vancouver Foundation and advised by the Minister's Council, the Disability Supports for Employment Fund has awarded 45 grants since its inception, totalling $2,055,069. In the 2005 – 2006 Council year, 17 grants were made to support projects providing disability-related supports to improve the employability of persons with disabilities by addressing barriers to employment.

The Minister's Council is committed to building on initiatives undertaken over the past three years, and to continuing to develop strong and lasting partnerships with the B.C. business and training community. The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games is British Columbia's opportunity to showcase the province as a leader in access, inclusion and employment for persons with disabilities. Council is developing a plan focused on building capacity in communities throughout the province, nurturing multi-sectoral partnerships, setting realistic and meaningful employment related goals, and challenging communities to assess and address issues of accessibility and inclusion through community support.

Background

B.C.'s Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities

Working Towards Greater Self-Reliance and Participation

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance envisions a province in which British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential. The ministry also provides services that move people toward sustainable employment and assists individuals and families in need.

In April 2002, the ministry announced a new Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities. The Strategy is a comprehensive approach to supporting persons with disabilities who want to take advantage of opportunities to be employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary or voluntary basis. It also provides for continued assistance to those who aren't able to gain independence.

The Strategy has focused on two key initiatives:

- The Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), offering a full range of services, tools and supports such as job training and placement, technical equipment, physical accommodations and follow-up workplace support (www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd/eppd.htm); and,
- The Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, which held its inaugural meeting in January 2003.

In April 2003, the government also established a $20 million endowment fund with the Vancouver Foundation to assist British Columbians with disabilities to find and maintain employment. This Disability Supports for Employment Fund supports a range of services so people with disabilities can participate in the workplace as they are able. Each year, approximately $1 million in income from the fund is available for grants to B.C. charities.

In December 2003, the Minister's Council report, *"A Profile of Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia: Employment, Labour Market Needs, and Occupational Projections,"* examined issues concerning the employment and employability of persons with disabilities in B.C. The research concluded that employers were not using the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities to their fullest potential. Moreover, researchers found that employers needed access to better, more readily available information about the workplace needs of people with disabilities.

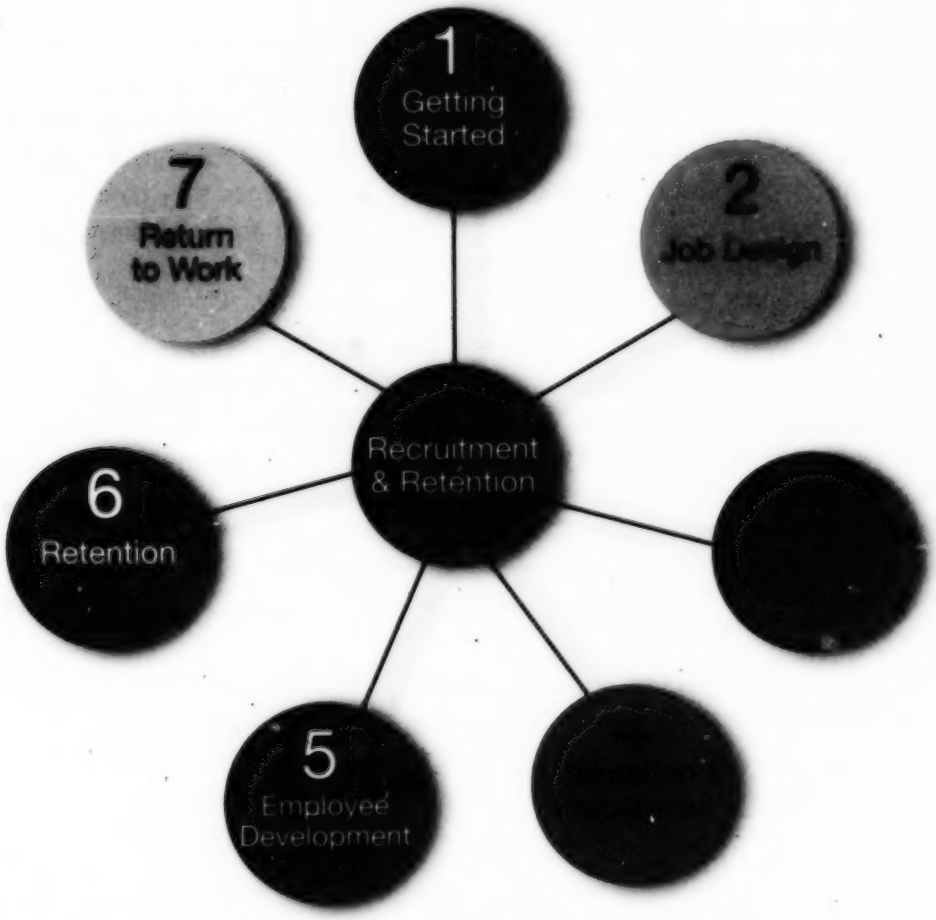
This research, coupled with the Minister's Council report *"Recruitment and Retention of Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia Research Report"* (2004), informed the development of the WorkAble Solutions initiative, which was launched on December 3, 2004. WorkAble Solutions includes different tools aimed to assist B.C.'s business community to recruit and retain people with disabilities. WorkAble Solutions takes a business approach to marketing the employment of persons with disabilities to the business community. For example in the *"An Employers Handbook"* includes providing a business case for hiring people with disabilities and has a section that dissolves myths about job performance, attendance, accommodation costs and educational attainment levels of people with disabilities.

The WorkAble Solutions tools include:

1. Employer Handbook

Recruiting and Retaining Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia – An Employer Handbook

The Employer Handbook is a practical 'how-to' guide to recruiting, retaining and accommodating employees with disabilities. The handbook demonstrates how employers can turn challenges into workable solutions and increase the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities through information, awareness, education and training, accommodation, workplace supports and effective disability management. The handbook provides useful information to employers on how to implement seven components of the recruitment/retention cycle. The seven components are:



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2. Website: www.workablesolutionsbc.ca

This website is a contemporary job source that connects employers and job seekers with disabilities in British Columbia. The website is beneficial to both persons with disabilities and employers. It is a job posting resource for British Columbians with disabilities who are seeking employment, and it facilitates the recruitment of persons with disabilities for the business community. Support for employers is available on the website and resources include the Employer Handbook and the research report, as well as links and information on employment agencies.

Furthermore, the website allows B.C. employers to demonstrate their commitment to hiring persons with disabilities by advertising job postings on the WorkAble Solutions site.

3. Corporate Video

The WorkAble Solutions Corporate Video is a short informative tool that offers employers a quick summary of the benefits of recruiting and retaining people with disabilities in their organizations. Industry leaders and employees with disabilities are featured throughout, each recounting a compelling story of the mutually positive experience they have experienced as part of organizations that hire and accommodate qualified job seekers with disabilities.

In developing this video, the Council sends a clear message to employers: hiring and accommodating employees with disabilities will have a positive impact on your employees, customers and business performance. The video's testimonials illustrate how hiring persons with disabilities provides tangible benefits for both the employer and employee with a disability.

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The BC Employer/Persons with Disabilities Inclusion Marketing Pilot Project (The Marketing Pilot)

A project that gains insight and momentum from the business community it aims to reach

On February 26, 2005, the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities collaborated on a unique six-month pilot project in partnership with Kwantlen University College and the BC Human Resources Management Association. The project was funded by the Vancouver Foundation, and in-kind support from the Minister's Council and London Drugs.

Embodying the sprit of the Minister's Council, the Marketing Pilot brought together business, government, education/training institutions and people with disabilities to work together on engaging B.C. business leaders on employing people with disabilities. This project assisted employers and the business community to invest in an untapped labour market source for their companies – people with disabilities.

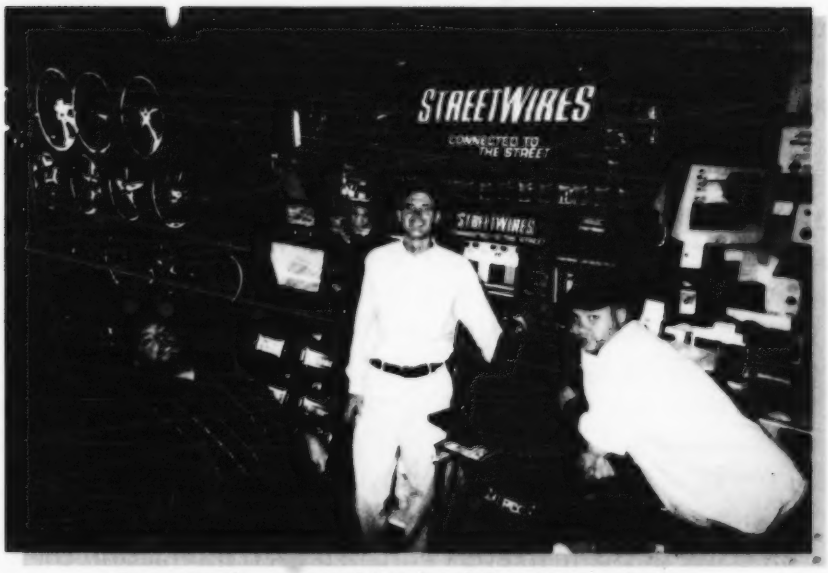
Ten people with disabilities were hired to work on the project, eight of whom became marketers. The project sought to hire students or recent graduates with disabilities in the two pilot regions of Victoria and Greater Vancouver. The eight marketers represented diverse educational backgrounds, from public relations to sociology. Represented in the group were persons with visual impairments, chronic heath conditions, physical/mobility disabilities, mental heath disability, and hearing impairments. With all their differences, their similarity was their experience in the labour market. All of the marketers had experienced significant barriers to employment.

The diversity of the marketers enriched each interaction they had with employers through the project; "[The Marketers'] personal experience and passion for the project shone through in the presentation . . ." said one employer, another told us, "[They] are the living business case."

The team of marketers with disabilities was specifically trained to assist employers in understanding the business case for hiring persons with disabilities. The team used the tools developed for WorkAble Solutions to educate British Columbia's employers on the steps to recruit, employ and retain persons with disabilities.

"I can make the business case for myself now."
said Nadia Kanani, marketer.

Engaging employers was accomplished through direct marketing (determined as the most effective method of reaching employers by the evaluation consultant) through presentations in the employer's workplace, drop-in informal presentations, hosting exhibition booths at regional conferences, a project launch and presentations at regularly planned human resources meetings.



Ryan Lachance and Michael Currie, marketers at Krank'd Car Audio

April 7 Project launch in Victoria

The launch of the project was attended by the Minister, Council members and project partners (Bonnie Campbell of Thrifty foods, Jim Skinner of London Drugs and representatives from Kwantlen University College and BC Human Resources Management Association).

Project Leader, Rachael Ross notes

> "Our marketing team is enthusiastic and very capable of spreading WorkAble Solutions into the competitive market. The team has an intimate understanding of the issues, all having faced obstacles in their own employment endeavours, bringing strength to their approach of this initiative. The business case is strong, and the labour market climate is excellent for this project."

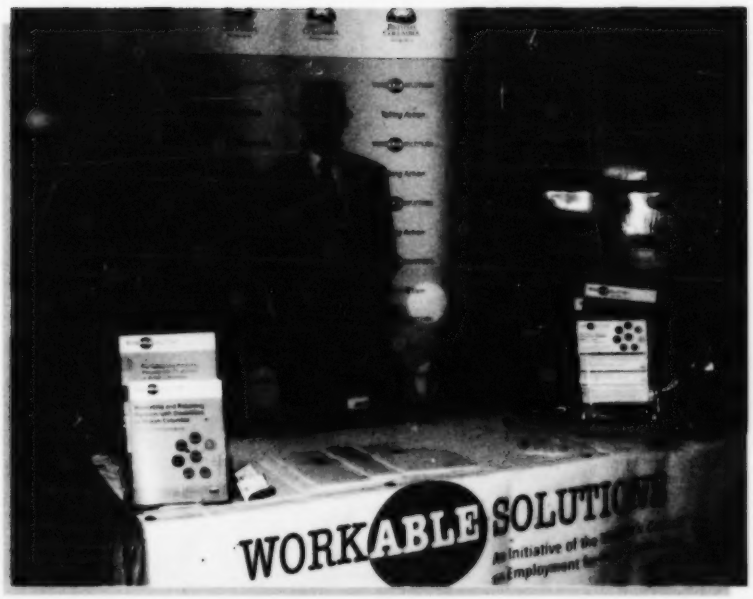
The event was well reported through Victoria newscasts, radio and bulletins.

Ann Cheng presenting WorkAble Solutions brochure to employers.

Conferences

- BC Human Resources Management Association Annual Conference on June 8 – 10. Seventy-eight employer contacts were made; and 28 site visits requested.
- Union of B.C. Municipalities Tradeshow and Exhibition, Sept 28 – 29. Direct contact made with over 200 delegates – including mayors, exhibitors and city councilors.

Discussions initiated regularly at the booth with the human resources delegates about the employment of persons with disabilities in the delegate's community, accessibility initiatives and the possible applications of the WorkAble Solutions tools, for example, in public policy, employment initiatives, services for persons with disabilities and applications in workplaces and HR departments. We were very pleased to meet with many delegates enthusiastic about WorkAble Solutions.



Honourable Claude Richmond visits the WorkAble Solutions booth at the Union of B.C. Municipalities Tradeshow and Exhibition.

back row: Minister Richmond and Michael Currie, marketer; front: Rachael Ross, Project Leader and Steve Reid, Manager, Strategic Partnerships for Persons with Disabilities Unit

Participants in the project felt the work was extremely important and an effective method of engaging employers in employing persons with disabilities.

"We are changing the social and cultural perception of persons with disabilities," said one marketer. Another marketer told us that "discussion involving everyone present generated enthusiasm for change."

Employers remarked on how the project increased their knowledge and skills related to hiring persons with disabilities, ". . . it highlighted an area that we weren't exposed to, it broke down barriers as it isn't mainstream information." Another employer said, "It has made me aware of a different pool of talent."

The project impacted the lives of the marketers with disabilities as well. The marketers reported an increase in their employability related to the skills they acquired through the project, their contact with employers, and the confidence they gained through the employment experience. "I believe in myself more and my capabilities, and had the opportunity to meet lots of employers," said Ann Cheng, marketer.

Ann Cheng and Nora McKellum, marketers

"I have more self-confidence now. People now see a kid from a small town can make a difference." – Ryan Lachance, marketer

"I am certain that all the skills that I have acquired will be valued throughout my career." – Ann Cheng, marketer

Marketing targets for the pilot were originally set at 60 to 90 site visits. Surpassing all expectations, the team was able to complete a total of 125 site visits. The project was also extended for three months.

Today almost 90 employers have registered their commitment to the WorkAble Solutions website, and the number is growing!

Plans are underway to enhance the WorkAble Solutions website through consultation with all the stakeholders, including job-seekers with disabilities, and to build on the success of the marketing pilot project with a focus on internship opportunities for persons with disabilities across the province.

The Disability Supports for Employment Fund

Removing Barriers to Employment

In April 2003, the Disability Supports for Employment Fund was created to fund innovative projects that provide disability-related supports to improve the employability of persons with disabilities by reducing barriers to employment.

The Fund recognizes the diversity of the population of persons with disabilities in British Columbia and supports initiatives by non-profit, charitable organizations that promote the social and economic independence of individuals with disabilities through employment, self-employment and volunteer work.

The Disability Supports for Employment Fund is a donor-advised fund, established with a $20 million endowment from the B.C. government and administered by the Vancouver Foundation. The foundation was selected as fund manager because of its province-wide mandate and long-standing history of philanthropic leadership.

Three central goals of the Fund are:

- Initiate approaches that have the potential to create systemic change in the employment of persons with disabilities in B.C.
- Build the capacity of community agencies, communities and volunteers who provide disability supports for employment to advance the employability of persons with disabilities

- Encourage initiatives that support the development of inter-agency, employer and pan-government cooperation and collaboration in delivery of disability supports for employment

Simply, disability supports for employment are defined as "goods and services designed to assist persons with disabilities in securing and retaining employment."

A lack of disability related supports is one of the primary barriers to employment for persons with disabilities. The Disability Supports for Employment Fund is working to address this issue by supporting projects across the province that promote the social and economic independence of individuals with disabilities through employment and volunteer work.

Past Disability Supports for Employment Fund Recipients

British Columbia Rehabilitation $50,000

Return to Work Program for the Assistive Technology Service at GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre

This grant was provided to augment assistive technologies, specifically computer access for a return to work program.

Specially designed keyboards, input devices (mouse), switches, software, portable computers, and wireless devices were purchased.

The equipment is being well received as the following testimonial illustrates.

> ***"When I came down from Dawson City, I had no idea of the power of computers. My arthritis is so bad I was resigned to sitting in an old-folks home for the next fifty years. Through the use of this Lab I am now comfortable with continuing my education-and perhaps even reintegrating myself into the world by moving south to Whitehorse."*** **– Service recipient.**

Neil Squire Foundation $160,000

Assistive Technology for Employment Centre (ATEC)

Enabling physically disabled persons to enter or remain in the workforce is at the core of the Neil Squire Society's goal of creating opportunities for independence for individuals with physical disabilities.

Disability Supports for Employment Fund funding supported the development and establishment of an Assistive Technology Employment Centre (ATEC), which led to a network of centres developed for the provision of disability supports for employment.

The development included purchasing equipment, occupational assessments, assistive technologies, and general establishment of the office.

The grant will support the ATEC infrastructure.

The Disability Supports for Employment Fund has funded the Neil Squire Foundation for another year.

British Columbia Paraplegic Association $50,000
SETS (Specialized Employment Technology Support Service)

Customized assistive devices were developed for 10 entrepreneurs with disabilities.

These products were created for situations where there was no off-the shelf product capable of addressing the unique individualized technical support needs.

Participants contributed significantly to the design and development of the equipment.

The following devices were developed as a result of this project:

- An industrial sewing machine was modified to eliminate the need for a foot pedal. This adaptation supported two people: a person with muscular dystrophy to produce heavy duty backpacks for ventilators (this individual was also responsible for the original design for the backpacks); and for a clothing designer with post-polio disabilities.
- An arm support was developed to enable an artist with severe arthritis to support his arm while painting. With some modification to a computer arm support and a linear actuator, the individual is able to support his arm while moving horizontally across the canvas and hit a switch to raise his arm vertically.
- The circuitry of a keyboard was modified to facilitate the work of a software developer with cerebral palsy. Other computer adaptations included a special switch for a laptop that enables a quadriplegic to run his PowerPoint presentations during speaking engagements. A voice amplifier was created for a laptop computer to support the presentations of a person with Duchene Muscular Dystrophy who does a lot of public speaking. Finally, a voice recognition head mouse for a computer was developed for a van rental investor with a spinal cord injury.
- A mechanic's stand that will hold his legs in a standing position has enabled a mechanic with a spinal cord injury to continue his job.

Selkirk College $50,000

Internet Business Development for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (IBDE) Program:

Provides an opportunity for adults with disabilities to enhance their work and employability skills in a self-paced and supported work and learning environment. This program offers a creative and attractive way for the entrepreneurs with disabilities to earn an income and work towards financial independence.

In 2004 the IBDE program was the recipient of two prestigious awards: The Conference Board of Canada's Award for Community-based Learning Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Minister's Award of Excellence and Innovation from Western Diversification in British Columbia.

Disability Supports for Employment Fund is supporting this initiative for another year.

Grants are awarded bi-annually in June and December. The Minister's Council on Employment for Persons Disabilities advises the Vancouver Foundation on the disbursement of funds.

For more information about the Disability Supports for Employment Fund, including funding guidelines, the grant application process and application deadlines, you can visit the Vancouver Foundation website at: www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca.

2005 Disability Supports for Employment Fund Grant Recipients

$39,521 **British Columbia Centre for Ability Association**

Business Mentorship Project

This project address employment barriers faced by individuals with disabilities by establishing a mentoring program as a strategic measure to prepare persons with disabilities for upward mobility. The goal is to transfer knowledge, attitude and aspirations to build competence.

$28,806 **Coast Foundation Society (1974)**

Community Partnerships and Employment Development Coordinator

This project assist workers in Sewing With Heart to develop and establish a member run co-op; liaise with employers to hire, train and help clients find work; and coach clients and employers to maintain employment.

$80,000 **ConnecTra Society**

Abilities Plus Outsourcing Services (Abilities Plus)

A unique matching/placement service model for contractors with disabilities has been implemented in Abbotsford and Vancouver. This service adds value to existing self-employment programs by filling the gap between development of a business plan and initial business start-up and the need to enhance the longer term success of entrepreneurs with disabilities.

$20,000 **Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS)**

Recovery Works Temporary Job Placement Service – Phase One

A project designing and developing an operational business plan for a not-for-profit temporary job placement service targeted at people in addiction recovery programs.

$36,400 Pacific Cinematheque Pacifique Society

Open i: A Digital Filmmaking Initiative

A project for 30 to 40 young adults with disabilities to participate in a digital filmmaking program. Participants create a video piece for application portfolios, thereby increasing their access to employment and post-secondary opportunities in media production.

$99,950 POLARIS Employment Services Society

Working Matters

This project demonstrates how 18 youth (15–30 yrs) with developmental disabilities can assess, seek, administer and evaluate their disability supports for employment. Additionally, a new model for providing employment supports to people with an intellectual disability is developed and documented for transferability.

$28,677 Selkirk College

Internet Business Development for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (IBDE) Program

This project supports the upgrading of the IBDE online course curriculum for the new versions of FrontPage and PhotoShop software.

$28,000 Vernon Disability Resource Centre

Targeted Employability Skills Training Program

This Targeted Employability Skills Training Program implements a new model for integrating classroom employability instruction and skill-specific training and work experience for diverse students with disabilities.

$55,000 BC Society for Non-Profit Sustainability

Building Capacity in the Disability Supports for Employment Community

Sector research and individual organizational assessments are used to identify the key capacity challenges facing organisations providing employment related programming to persons with disabilities.

$45,000 **Penticton and Area Cooperative Enterprises/ BC Schizophrenia Society**

Connections and Supports in Employment for Mental Health Consumers

This project focuses on providing transitional support in the form of job coaching, training, evaluation and the follow-up required to assist mental health client-centred recovery in the domain of employment. This fosters and develops paid employment opportunities resulting in a better quality of life and longer periods of wellness for the consumer. This project guarantees for the mental health client a comprehensive approach to training, skill development and security provisions in the workplace that are so important to the success of our client population while they are in recovery.

$40,000 **Canadian Paraplegic Association/BC Paraplegic Association**

BC Regional Special Employment Technology Service

Regional consultations throughout the province are carried out to determine the need for a customized technology service for persons with disabilities engaged in entrepreneurship. The consultation process should also result in the identification of other partners/stakeholders at the regional level.

$25,000 **Mennonite Central Committee Supportive Care Services**

Employer Partners in Mental Health

This project is intended to: develop an employer focus group to "champion" the hiring of people with disabilities and encourage other employers to do the same; develop a marketing strategy that explains the advantages of hiring people with disabilities; develop a training component for employers hiring people with disabilities and to offer job support and crisis support to both the employee and employer. This project furthers the organization's goals by assisting people with disabilities to live in the community.

$55,300 Neil Squire Foundation

Assistive Technology for Employment Centre (ATEC) Phase II

Enabling physically disabled persons to enter or remain in the workforce is at the core of the Neil Squire Society's goal of creating opportunities for independence for individuals with physical disabilities. This grant assists the Assistive Technology for Employment Centre (ATEC) project to determine if the hub-site model is practical, effective and meeting the needs of the clientele. The grant supports the ATEC infrastructure.

$64,000 North Shore Association for the Mentally Handicapped

Ready for Work

The Ready for Work project is intended to develop a process to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to transition from sheltered workshop situations to community employment settings. The project also assists youth with developmental challenges to explore and prepare for employment placements.

$30,450 Quesnel Tillicum Society

Moving Forward – Life Skills Program for FASD Adults Phase II

A program providing life skills for aboriginal adults with "Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder," builds a foundation leading to employability or independent living. The Friendship Centre provides supportive services and programs to people from the four local bands and the community at large.

$13,000 Victoria Disability Resource Centre

Access to Labour Market Information and Referral Services for All

This initiative provides assistive technology to address the needs of people with visual impairments and learning disabilities. This equipment is used to teach job readiness and new technical skills.

$35,400 Western Society for Children with Birth Disorders

Accessible Career Experience

This project is designed to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in two six-week programs to increase personal independence and accessibility to employment.

The Next Steps

This is an exciting time for persons with disabilities in British Columbia. The province is actively preparing for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and the host city, Vancouver, elected a mayor with a disability. As well, there are increased labour market opportunities for persons with disabilities and overall awareness of disability issues is broadening.

These developments set the stage for a dynamic and changing time for people with disabilities in British Columbia. The Minister's Council sees the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games as a catalyst for positive change.

Positioning B.C. as a leader in access and inclusion by 2010 – and beyond.

The Minister's Council is developing and partnering on capacity building initiatives in communities throughout the province, and continuing a strategic approach to all initiatives undertaken by Council. Council is working with the Vancouver Foundation and Legacies Now on a strategy to build accessible and inclusive communities across British Columbia.

The Minister's Council is addressing issues of access and inclusion for persons with disabilities through the establishment of strong partnerships and the strategic use of the Disability Supports for Employment Fund. By addressing barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and taking a holistic community-focused approach to disability supports for employment, Council aims to increase opportunities in the labour market for persons with disabilities.

Multi-sectoral partnerships, setting realistic and meaningful employment related goals, and challenging communities to assess and address issues of accessibility, inclusion, and community support are actions the Minister's Council is undertaking with other organizations to position B.C. as a leader in access by 2010 – and beyond.

The BC Employer/Person with Disabilities Inclusion Marketing Pilot project demonstrated the effectiveness of the WorkAble Solutions materials. Employers responded positively to the resources, breaking down many misconceptions employers had regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. The Minister's Council will build on the successes of the pilot project, and respond to an expressed need by service providers and employers to expand the project throughout the province. Further, Council will pursue internship opportunities for job-seekers with disabilities across the province, and continued engagement of employers with WorkAble Solutions.

WorkAble Solutions has become a pillar of the Minister's Council – a tool to assist employers through the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities. Plans are underway to update and promote this important employment resource. WorkAble Solutions demonstrates the success of Council in an initiative to support the full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities in B.C.

. . . building capacity in the communities throughout the province . . .

The Minister's Council will soon launch its Speakers Bureau – available in cities across the province. The Speakers Bureau will offer communities an opportunity to access information on Council initiatives, employment resources through WorkAble Solutions and information on the Disability Supports for Employment Fund. The Speakers Bureau extends the "call to action" to the community.

The continuation of initiatives undertaken in 2005–2006, and the pursuit of a coordinated, community-focused and multi-sectoral approach to its 2006–2007 action plan allows Council to attain its vision of access and inclusion in employment for persons with disabilities in British Columbia.

A Final Note

The Council encourages you, whether you are an employer, person with a disability or a stakeholder, to join the Council's "call to action" challenge to increase the employment, employability and independence of persons with disabilities. It is a challenge where success means we all benefit.

For more information on Council initiatives, please visit the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities website at www.eia.gov.bc.ca/epwd/

Members of the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities

Honourable Claude Richmond (Chair)
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

Maurizio Baldini
Coordinator, Peer Support, Canadian Mental Health Association, South Okanagan

David Berrington
President, BC Human Resources Management Association

Bonnie Campbell
Vice President, Human Resources and Public Relations, Thrifty Foods

Alice Downing
Consultant, Trustee, BC Pulp and Paper Industry Health and Welfare Plan

Ron Drolet
Vice President, Planning & Marketing, BC Transit

Roger Garriock
Vice President, Destination ImagiNation, Inc.

Mary Mahon Jones
Chief Executive Officer, Council of Tourism Associations

Winston Leckie
Executive Director, Opportunities through Rehabilitation & Work Society (ORW)

Cairine MacDonald
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

Michele Mawhinney
Vice President, Human Resources, Vancouver International Airport

Jim Reed
President, BC College Presidents

Bill Ross
Regional Executive Head, Service Canada

Jim Skinner
General Manager, Human Resources, London Drugs Limited

Dallas Smith
Executive Chairman, Tlowitsis First Nation

His Worship Mayor Sam Sullivan
City of Vancouver

Mike Touchie
President, BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)

Faye Wightman (Ex-officio)
President & CEO, Vancouver Foundation

John Winter
President, BC Chamber of Commerce

Special thanks to past Council members:

Don Avison
President, University Presidents' Council of British Columbia

Robert Buchan
President, BC University Colleges Consortium

Kevin Evans
Vice President, Government Relations, Retail Council of Canada

Clint Mahlman
Vice President, Human Resources, London Drugs Limited

David Park
Assistant Managing Director and Chief Economist, Vancouver Board of Trade

Linda Sinclair
Vice President, Service Delivery, Western Canada, RBC Royal Bank

WorkAble Solutions Unveils New Logo

The Minister's Council is pleased to unveil the new logo WorkAble Solutions to reflect the project's strong connection with the B.C. government goals, values and support.

The Workable Solutions logo incorporates the design of the new provincial logo.

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